THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) During his visit to New Delhi from 5-7 April 2006, Mr. Pascal Lamy, Director General, World Trade Organisation (WTO), held ministerial level consultations with the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Finance Ministry. During these consultations, the main issue that camp up was on ways and means to meet the approaching deadline of 30th April 2006 for finalizing the modalities on negotiations on Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) as decided by the Ministers at the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference held in Hong Kong, China, from 13-18 December 2005. Besides this, he also held discussions on the other issues covered by the WTO Doha Work Programme. During these discussions, the Government reiterated its concerns and interests in the on going negotiations under the Doha Work Programme and on the need to deliver pro development outcomes applicable to all WTO Members, which meet the aspirations of the diverse group of countries, especially the developing countries. Since, these consultations were informal in nature, no decision was required to be taken.

Trade with Sri Lanka

2592. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the visit of the Sri Lanka Foreign Minister to New Delhi in December, 2005, a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement with Sri Lanka was reached;

(b) if so, the terms and salient features of the agreement; and

(c) the imports from the exports to Sri Lanka during the financial year 2003-04, 2004-05 and the current financial year, so far, item-wise and how far the trade with Sri Lanka is likely to increase during the following years in pursuance of the new agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The major items of imports from Sri Lanka during the last three years are Non-Ferrous Metals, Spices, Electric Machinery except Electronics, Machinery except Electric and Electronics, Electronic Goods,

Metalifers Ores & Metal Scrap etc. and the major items of exports to Sri Lanka during the last three years are Petroleum Crude & Products, Transport Equipments, Primary and Semi-Finished Iron & Steel, Cotton Yarn, Fabrics, Made-up etc, Machinery and Instruments, Drugs, Pharmaceuticals & Fine Chemicals, etc. The details of bilateral trade with Sri Lanka are available in the website of Department of Commerce, www.commerce.nic.in under the heading "information Dissemination—Export-Import Data Bank". The volume of bilateral trade in the future cannot be quantified at this stage.

Indo-Australia Defence Cooperation

2593. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Australia agreed on a framework of cooperation on defence and security issues including keeping sea lane safe;

(b) if so, whether MoU was signed by representatives of both countries in the presence of Indian PM and the visiting Australian PM;

(c) if so, the details of the agreement reached and to what extent both countries have agreed on cooperation on defence and security related issues; and

(d) whether under the MoU, it was decided to set up an Indo-Australian joint venture group to monitor the ongoing defence cooperation between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) A memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Defence Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Australia was signed on 6.3.2006 during the visit of Australian Prime Minister to India. The objective of the MoU is to develop a close and constructive defence relationship between India and Australia which will be instrumental in promoting the common interests of the two countries, including stability of the Asia-Pacific region, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, commitment to combating international terrorism and securing maritime lines of communication. The MoU also envisages setting up of a Joint Working Group on Defence for implementation of its provisions.